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Duxbury Clipper

## Seaweed Has Some Residents Seeing Red

By RAY HAINER

A harsh winter and unusually high tides have left Duxbury Beach strewn with rocks and clumps of rotting seaweed. And a late-arriving summer has meant that more beachgoers have had fewer nice days to enjoy the beach, untidy as it may be. The presence of endangered species on the beach has also contributed to crowding in the beach parking lots.

A discussion on the problems at the beach took place at the Board of Selectmen meeting Monday night, and several residents were in atten-

dance to make themselves heard.

Residents Diane McMann, Maureen Ajemian, Mary Barclay, Jane McNiff, and Dawn Murphy (who referred to themselves playfully as "the mayors of the beach") raised concerns over the many difficulties they have encountered at the beach this summer.

McMann called the physical condition of the beach "disgraceful," and said that the combination of problems at the beach this year — from the rocks and seaweed to the

continued on page 7



Unusually large amounts of seaweed have brought a foul odor and bugs to Duxbury Beach this year.

continued from page one

overcrowding and parking difficulties — is the worst she can remember. "We've never before seen it like this," she said.

The consensus at the meeting was that the excessive amount of seaweed was the

from the state and conservation commission. financial considerations have so far prevented the Reservation from carrying out the cleanup.

Charlie Fargo, president of the Duxbury Beach Reservation, explained to the Selectmen that this has been a

Due to the presence of endangered species on the beach, Beers was required to seek the permission of the various groups that administer the beach before starting any cleanup effort.

Beers consulted Dr. Scott Melvin, a senior zoologist in

said that the unusually late-arriving summer has made crowding especially problematic.

As for the complaints about illegal parking, Beers addressed them by explaining that the harbormaster's office

most important issue for most beachgoers.

McMann said she even contacted the Board of Health regarding her concerns about the bugs that have infested the rotting seaweed. Selectman Chairwoman Betsy Sullivan acknowledged that she, too, considered the excessive bugs a health issue, and was disturbed herself by the number of them on a recent visit to the beach. "I'm still itching," she joked.

Harbormaster Don Beers, who also attended the meeting, compared the seaweed situation to "a Pandora's box" in a phone interview earlier this week. The seaweed is not just resting on the surface of the beach, he explained, but in some cases may be buried two to three feet under the sand. The seaweed cannot just be picked up, therefore, but needs to be excavated Beers said.

To carry out the excavation, Beers approached contractor Fred Nava of Nava & Son Contractors in Kingston, who was praised at the Selectmen's meeting for his expertise with Duxbury Beach. Beers referred to him as a "pro of pros," and Charlie Fargo, president of Duxbury Beach Reservation, reminded everyone of Nava's extensive experience. "I've been working on the beach since 1975, when the Reservation was started, and Nava was there even before me," he said.

the Reservation has already suffered financially due to the harsh winter. The Reservation spent \$250,000, Fargo said, "just to put the beach back together" after the winter, and has already spent more than the money it receives from its lease to the town this year, which he said was an "unusual occurrence."

As for the rocks on the beach, it appears that they are staying put. Due to their sheer number, everyone agreed, removing the rocks is both too impractical and costly.

Andre Martecchini dismissed another alternative — sand dumping — as equally costly and impractical, and seemed to question the wisdom of attempting to transform the beach in general. "As much as I'd like a white-sand, Caribbean beach, that's not Duxbury Beach," Martecchini said. "[Duxbury Beach]'s a natural beach."

Apart from the appearance of the beach itself, McMann and her associates also brought up the crowding in the beach parking lots this summer. "On any given day, you see in the residents' lot people with red stickers, and even people without stickers," McMann said. "All we ask is for the rules to be enforced."

In response to McMann's complaints, Beers acknowledged "I can't defend a lot of this, because I know it's been happening." By way of explanation, however, Beers

the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, who gave Beers permission to use heavy equipment to remove the seaweed.

Beers also consulted the chairman of the Duxbury Conservation Commission, Friend Weiler. The Conservation Commission agreed to let Nava clean up the seaweed, but would not allow anyone else to, Beers said.

Despite the green light

the parking lot, and has been issuing more \$50 citations for illegal parking than in the past.

Beers encouraged residents to come to him with their problems and concerns. "Anyone who knows me, knows I'm very reactionary, and will move quickly on any complaint," he said.

Despite the obstacles standing between the Beach Reservation, the Harbormaster, and a clean, seaweed- and crowd-free beach, Beers, Fargo, and the